

Characters

- MOLLY, late twenties, a waitress.
- THE YOUNG MAN, late twenties, a factory worker.
- JIM is played by the same actor as the Young Man but he appears endowed with sublime sex appeal.
- THE HANGING WOMEN, a chorus of five.
- MACK, a bartender in his forties.
- JOHN, a lean middle-aged cowboy.
- ALBERTA, a twenty-seven-year-old, who refuses to grow.

Act 1: Molly and the Hanging Women

PART I

Molly and the Hanging Women

(An old-fashioned saloon typical of warm climates. There are several swinging doors on both sides. Both sides of the saloon lead to streets. Another swinging door on the back wall leads to the kitchen. The counter is alongside the back wall. A trap door on the floor behind the counter leads to the basement. There are fans hanging from the ceiling, potted plants, spittoons, tables, and chairs. There is a wall mirror, and a cage with a bird. On the counter there is a gun, and the two porcelain figures--one in the shape of a woman; the other, Cupid. A top hat hangs from a hat rack.

The play of lights indicated in the script denotes an important moment in the life of one or another character.

Molly is alone in the tavern. She wears a black satin uniform. She prepares herself a cup of coffee, takes off her shoes, sits down and begins, to read to herself from a magazine.)

MOLLY

(She mumbles)

Rosie was a damn good waitress. She wasn't the kind that would spill any whiskey on the counter.

(She reads out loud)

But when Sam started walking toward her, her hand started shaking, and the whiskey spilled. Sam, her beloved Sam, whom she was even thinking of marrying, had shot at the Sheriff. What a thing to do. This broke her heart and made her nervous. That's why she spilled the drink. Sam, who seemed like such a nice guy, had shot at the Sheriff and now he had the nerve to come into the tavern as if nothing had happened, or at least he had the nerve to come into the tavern. He pulled a chair from one of the tables, turned it toward him and straddled it. He looked at her for a while without saying anything. Then he said, "Are you angry because I shot at the Sheriff?"

(Molly puts the magazine down and takes a puff from her cigarette. She speaks the following dialogue out loud, acting out both characters in the story.)

"Are you angry because I shot at the Sheriff?"

(Sarcastically.)

"Naw, I was getting tired of his face. I wouldn't mind seeing someone else wear that star. What would you like?"

(One of the swinging doors opens slightly. The Young Man puts his head in. Molly does not notice him.)

"Let me have a steak ... rare ... And don't bother putting arsenic in the gravy."

(*Molly writes in her check pad.*)

"Rare, no arsenic." --Oh, boy.

(*Molly notices the Young Man. She is flustered. They look at one another for a moment. He smiles and walks away. Molly begins to feel sleepy. She yawns. She leans her head on the table and falls asleep. A dreamlike atmosphere is suggested by means of lights, smoke, or the lifting of the walls. A swinging door opens. Jim puts his head in. He looks exactly like the Young Man and is played by the same actor.*)

JIM

(*Suspiciously.*)

Is there a waiter here?

MOLLY

(*Raising her head.*)

Yes.

(*Jim enters. He is dressed in glittering lace. He looks like a prince in a fairy tale. Five women surround him as if they were a floating part of him. These are the Hanging Women. When he is still, they hang on to him gently. He sits at a table. Molly stretches and walks to him. She waits for his order.*)

JIM

Isn't there a waiter here?

MOLLY

Yes, me.

JIM

I mean a man waiter.

MOLLY

No, there's just me.

(*Jim looks at Molly for a moment. Then he stands and walks to the door.*)

JIM

I don't need one more woman.

(*As Jim exits, the doors swing. Mack enters with a box of soda bottles, goes behind the counter and disappears behind it. Jim puts his head through the doors again.*)

Didn't I just see a man behind the bar?

MOLLY

Yes.

JIM

Where did he go?

MOLLY

He's in the basement.

JIM

Is he coming back?

MOLLY

Mack!

MACK

What?

MOLLY

Are you coming back?

MACK

Yes.

MOLLY

Yes, he is coming back.

(Jim starts walking toward the table where he sat before.)

JIM

I thought you said there was no waiter.

MOLLY

He's not a waiter.

JIM

(Stopping.)

What is he?

MOLLY

Bartender.

(Jim walks to the bar. A few moments pass. Molly looks at him with curiosity. He tries to avoid her glance. Mack appears behind the bar.)

JIM

A double rye, please.

(Mack pours a drink. Jim takes the drink to a table.)

MACK

Boy, that's a man for you.... Look at that.

(Mack exits. Molly sits at Jim's table and looks at the Hanging Women.)

MOLLY

Who are they?

(*Jim drinks his rye in one gulp.*)

JIM

Who?

(*Molly points to the Hanging Women.*)

Friends.

MOLLY

What's the matter with them?

JIM

Nothing is the matter with them.

MOLLY

Why are they hovering over you like that?

JIM

They like me.

(*Molly looks at the Hanging Women.*)

MOLLY

Doesn't it bother you to have them ...

(*She gestures. Jim shakes his head.*)

JIM

A little.

MOLLY

Why don't you tell them to scoot?

JIM

I have.

MOLLY

And?

JIM

They won't go.

MOLLY

(*Waving her hands as if to scare away chickens.*)

Shhh ... Shhh ...

(*The Hanging Women flutter.*.)

JIM

Don't do that.... You'll hurt their feelings.

(*Jim looks for Mack. While his head is turned Molly waves her arms with sweeping movements.*.)

MOLLY

Shh ... Shhh ...

(*The Hanging Women scatter all over the room. They are breathless and in a state of anxiety. The lights flash on and remain strong through the following scene.*.)

They're off.

(*Jim is also breathless and in a state of anxiety.*.)

What's the matter?

(*Jim gasps for air.*.)

I thought you wanted'..them off.

HANGING WOMEN

(*Sing*.)

Do not collapse just now, world.

Do not collapse just now.

Wait a bit. Wait a bit. Perhaps I can find my way back.

MOLLY

I thought you wanted them off.

(*The Hanging Women start moving toward Jim.*.)

JIM

Oh ... oh ... oh ... oh ...

The flower of love grew on me,

And she pulled it off.

(*The Hanging Women surround him again. Molly pats them.*.)

MOLLY

It's all right now.

JIM

It grew from my side.

It grew from my legs.

It grew from my arms.

The most beautiful thing grew off me.

The flower of love.

And she pulled it off.

HANGING WOMEN

(*Sing.*)

Oh ... oh ... oh ...

MOLLY

It's all right ... you're back.

HANGING WOMEN

It's just that I hear
A little bit of love
Going down the drain.
Glop, glop, glop,
Going down the drain.

JIM

Oh, God. Oh, God.
She put them back.
But she pulled them off.

MOLLY

Gee whiz.

(*The lights go back to normal. Jim looks for Mack.*)

What do you want?

JIM

I thought I'd ask him for a drink. But that's all right.

MOLLY

(*Standing.*)

Double?

JIM

Don't bother.

MOLLY

It's no bother. That what I'm here for.

JIM

I changed my mind. I don't want a drink.

(*Molly sits.*)

MOLLY

Are you broke?

JIM

No.

MOLLY

It's on the house.

JIM

Why?

(Molly stares at Jim and speaks distractedly. He recognizes the look and becomes cautious.)

MOLLY

Oh, I don't know. I just thought I'd buy you a drink.

JIM

Why?

MOLLY

Why? ... That's how I felt.... I felt like buying you a drink.

(She walks toward Jim.)

JIM

Oh, God ... Well, don't buy me a drink. You go on out in there.

MOLLY

Where?

JIM

In the kitchen. Go in the kitchen and do what you have to do. Wash some glasses.

MOLLY

I don't wash the glasses. Mack does that.

JIM

Well ... read your magazine.... Don't come so close.

MOLLY

... Why not?

(She is very close to him.)

JIM

Oh, God.

(Molly throws her arms around Jim's neck and lets herself hang. The lights flash on and off.)

Listen ... lady ... excuse me a moment. Hey, miss ...

MOLLY

(Still hanging. Almost inaudibly.)

What?

JIM

Do I owe you anything?

MOLLY

I don't know.

JIM

Think about it for a moment.

MOLLY

I can't think now.

JIM

Look, I don't owe you anything. You have to let go.

(*Molly returns to her chair.*)

MOLLY

Well, what do you expect. I was curious.

JIM

That's all right. Just don't do it again.

(*Mack enters.*)

MACK

... That's a man for you.

JIM

Double rye, please.

(*Mack pours the drink and exits. Jim starts to stand.*)

MOLLY

I'll get it.

JIM

No, it's all right. I'll get it.

MOLLY

(*Going to the bar.*)

I'll get it. It's my job.

JIM

No, it's all right. I'd like to get my own drink if you don't mind.

MOLLY

That's all right. I'm the waitress.

(*She reaches for the drink.*)

JIM

It's my drink. I get my own drink if I want to.

MOLLY

You can't get your own drink. I get paid to get the drinks.

JIM

It's my drink. I'm paying for it and I don't want any favors.

MOLLY

It's no favor. It's my job.

(*Jim grabs her. They struggle for a moment. She manages to put the drink on the table.*)

Just leave me a tip.

JIM

You don't need a tip.

MOLLY

What do I need?

JIM

Love.

(*Molly hangs again. Mack enters.*)

MACK

You didn't have to bother. Molly would have brought it to you. Where's Molly?

(*Discovering her.*)

Molly ...

(*Molly doesn't answer.*)

Molly, what are you doing?

MOLLY

I'll be up in a minute.

MACK

What do you mean you'll be up in a minute? Molly ... what in the world are you doing?

JIM

She'll never let go.

MACK

How do you do it?

JIM

It's a burden.

MACK

I wish I had that burden.

JIM

They weigh a lot.

MACK

Leave them home. You don't know how to handle women.

JIM

I can't leave them home. It would hurt their feelings.

MACK

Hurt their feelings? What's the matter with you. Are you a sissy?

JIM

I don't want to hurt their feelings.

MACK

Hey, Molly, forget it, kid. This guy's a sissy.

(*She ignores him.*)

Hey, Molly, what's the matter with you? He's a sissy.

MOLLY

Shut up, Mack.

JIM

Bunch of creeps.

MACK

That's the trouble with women. Here's me, a real man. You name it, I have it. There's that creep ... a sissy.... Do they go for me? No. They go for him ... a sissy.

(*Mack starts moving furniture as if to prepare for cleaning the floor.*)

A burden he says ... women a burden ... wish I had that burden. I could take on a hundred. One right after the other. No problem. A hundred. Bang, bang, bang. Just like that.

(*Sings.*)

Bang bang bang bang
Bang
Bang bang bang bang
Bang
Bang
Bang
Bang

(*The Hanging Women surround Mack.*)

MACK & THE HANGING WOMEN

Bang bang bang bang
Bang bang bang bang
Bang bang bang bang
Bang bang bang bang
Bang bang bang bang
Bang
Bang bang bang bang
Bang
Bang
Bang

Bang bang bang bang
Bang bang bang bang Bang bang bang bang
Bang bang bang bang
Bang bang bang bang
Bang
Bang bang bang bang
Bang
Bang
Bang

Bang bang bang bang
Bang bang bang bang
Bang bang bang bang
Bang bang bang bang
Bang bang bang bang
Bang
Bang bang bang bang
Bang
Bang
Bang

MACK

(*Spoken.*)

But do they go for me? ... No.

(*The Hanging Women put their hands on Mack. He collapses.*)

HANGING WOMEN

Creep!

(*The Hanging Women go back to Jim. Mack stands. He turns to the Hanging Women the way a wrestler waits for an attack.*)

MACK

Try again.... Come on.... Come on.... Try again. I can take the lot of you. You yellow-bellied broads.

HANGING WOMEN

Creep!

MACK

Aw, bunch of dumb broads.

(*John enters. He wears black dungarees, a black shirt, a cowboy hat, and holsters with guns from his ankles to his armpits.*)

Hey, Molly, a customer.

(*Molly does not respond.*)

Hey, Molly.

MOLLY

What?

MACK

Customer.

MOLLY

Wait a moment.

JIM

Molly ...

MOLLY

What?

JIM

Are you going to stay?

(*Pause.*)

Molly, are you going to stay?

(*Pause.*)

I like you, Molly, but I just can't take on any more.

(*He waits a moment.*)

Listen, you have to let go.

MOLLY

I don't want to.

JIM

Well, you have to.

(*Molly lets go.*)

Are your feelings hurt?

MOLLY

(*Hurt.*)

No.

JIM

Molly, I can't take on any more. I just can't. I can hardly walk as it is. I can't play baseball. Do you understand what it is not to be able to play baseball? I just can't take on any more. And besides, I don't owe you anything.

MOLLY

Well, I liked it.

JIM

All right then, hang on. What's one more?

MOLLY

Not unless the others leave.

JIM

I can't tell them to leave.

MOLLY

Why not?

JIM

I'm indebted to them.

MOLLY

Why?

JIM

Because ... they like me.

MOLLY

That's nothing.

JIM

I'm indebted to them.

MOLLY

I can do more than that for a man.

JIM

I know, you're different.

MOLLY

So?

JIM

Molly, I can't.

MOLLY

You said I was different.

JIM

I'm indebted to them.

(Molly dries a tear, starts to walk away. Then turns to the Hanging Women and starts waving her arms.)

MOLLY

Shhh ... Shhh ...

JIM

Mollyyy! Don't!

MOLLY

Creep!

(The lights flash on and remain strong through the following scene. Molly takes off her apron. She gradually develops a German accent. She begins to behave in a manner resembling Marlene Dietrich.)

MACK

Molly ... Customer.

MOLLY

(To John.)

What do you want?

(John thinks a moment and begins to make a. gesture.)

Whiskey, double, very straight, hold the chaser, make it fast. He's dry.

JOHN

Make it a Bloody Mary.

MACK

(While preparing the drink.)

What was it like?

MOLLY

I can't explain it.

MACK

Try.

MOLLY

It felt right. That's all.

MACK

Come on.

MOLLY

You have to live it. You can't explain it.

MACK

(*Pouring whiskey for Molly.*)

It's for you.

MOLLY

(*She drinks it.*)

Thanks.

MACK

Now tell me.

MOLLY

What.

MACK

What was it like?

MOLLY

It felt right.

MACK

That doesn't mean anything.

MOLLY

It felt right to be near him.

MACK

That's nothing.

MOLLY

It's everything, you dumb creep. You'd never understand.

MACK

Well, explain it to me.

MOLLY

I can't explain it. Try it yourself.

MACK

What do you think I am?

MOLLY

Forget it then.

MACK

Are you going back?

MOLLY

Never again.

(She walks to John's table with his drink.)

MACK

Ha ha.

MOLLY

What does that mean? Ha ha.

MACK

He's not so good.

MOLLY

He's good all right. I'm just not going back.

(Molly drinks John's drink. She then goes to the bar and sits on it.)

MACK

What do you mean by drinking the customer's drink?

(Molly shrugs her shoulders.)

Who do you think you are.

(Mack pours another drink for John. Molly lights a cigarette.)

Here, bring it to him.

(Molly does not respond.)

Hey, Molly! ... Kid! ... Bring the customer his drink.

(Molly puffs some smoke. The lights start to shift slowly. Molly will be in a spot.)

MOLLY

Molly kid was. Are you blind, you creep? Can't you see what life has done to me? Molly kid was. I have just changed my name.

(*The music starts.*)

No. I'm not breaking into song. The moment is too sad. I'm not going back. Good as he is, my feelings are hurt.

JIM

Molly, come back.

MOLLY

Molly was. I have just changed my name.

(*The music plays louder as if to invite her to sing.*)

No. Little Molly would have sung, do re mi fa sol la ti, not me.

JIM

Molly, come back.

MOLLY

Not me. My feelings are hurt. Broken to pieces.

(*She pushes the figurine in the shape of a woman off the counter. It crashes on the floor. Mack picks up the pieces.*)

JIM

Come back, Molly.

(*Mack starts putting the pieces together.*)

MOLLY

Don't bother to put the pieces together, Mack. It will never be the same. Throw it away.

(*Mack throws the pieces in a garbage can. The sound pains Molly.*)

Goodbye, Molly ... poor kid ... she's gone.

(*Taking the figure of Cupid.*)

Perhaps you're too young to know how it hurts to love ... It hurts.

(*Molly and Jim stare at each other for a while. She looks away from him, showing her profile. She puts her foot up on the bar, puts a top hat on and her elbow on her knee.*)

It seems I did my song after all.

(*She rests her head on her hand.*)

MACK

OK, Molly, get off the bar.

MOLLY

Shut up, Mack.

JIM

Molly.

MACK

Get your feet off the bar. I won't have anybody putting their feet on the bar.

JIM

Leave her alone.

MACK

Who do you think you are? You come in here and look at the way she's acting. She's acting like a nut. She never acted like that before.

JIM

I know, I just broke her heart.

MACK

Molly.

MOLLY

Huh.

MACK

Look at her.

(*To Molly.*)

What's the matter with you?

MOLLY

Nothing is the matter with me. What are you talking about?

MACK

You're acting like a nut.

MOLLY

I'm not acting like a nut.

MACK

You better do something about her. I won't have anybody sitting at the bar.

JIM

I will....

(*To Molly.*)

Molly.

MOLLY

What?

JIM

You used to be a nice kid.

MOLLY

No more. Those are bygone days.

MACK

Well, somebody bring the customer his drink, or I'm not responsible for my acts.

(*Molly takes a puff of her cigarette. Jim takes the drink to John as John goes to the bar.*)

What do you want?

JOHN

I thought I'd get the drink myself.

MACK

It's on the table.

(*John goes to his table.*)

I'm glad you brought him the drink, otherwise I couldn't have answered for my acts.

JIM

I didn't do it for you. I did it for her.

JOHN

Thanks, I was beginning to get thirsty.

JIM

That's all right. I did it for her.

(*Going to Molly.*)

Molly ...

MOLLY

Hm.

JIM

Molly, I didn't mean to hurt you.

MOLLY

You can't hurt me. I have no heart.

JIM

You do, Molly, you have a heart.

MOLLY

I don't have a heart.

JIM

Molly, if I told you that I loved you, would you get off the bar?

MOLLY

No.

MACK

He's a sissy.

JIM

I am responsible ...

(*He sings.*)

I accept,
I accept,
I accept
The responsibility of my enormous sex appeal.
If a woman says she loves me,
I cannot tell her to go.

I breathe hot,
I breathe hot, I breathe hot,
And I breathe hot.
No woman has ever resisted me, and I accept,
The responsibility.

*J'accepte,
J'accepte,
J'accepte,
La responsabilité de mon énorme sex-appeal.
I cannot turn them away.
J'accepte
Les conséquences désastreuses de mon énorme sex-appeal.*

I never said to a woman,
I love you.
But I accept
The responsibility.

HANGING WOMEN

(*Sing.*)

To a woman you will say,
I love you.
She will not understand.
You will say,
I love you.
You will say,
I love you, twice.
Twice you'll say it.
I love you. I love you.
And then she'll understand.
Je t'aime. Je t'aime.

(Jim turns to Molly. His face is close to hers.)

JIM

Je t'aime.

(Molly turns her head to look at Jim and does not reply.)

I love you.

(Molly blows smoke in his face and smiles. Jim coughs. He is downcast. The Hanging Women move away from him. Jim walks to center stage and stands on his head with one leg bent and crossed, in a position resembling the Hanged Man of the Tarot.)

HANGING WOMEN

To a woman he said,
I love you.
She did not understand.
He said,
I love you.
But she did not understand.
He said, I love you, twice.
Twice he said it.
Je t'aime. I love you.
And then she understood.
But not a word came out of her mouth.
Only smoke.
And he lost his charm.
All his charm was lost.

(Spoken.)

Now, you're as common as Mack.

MACK

And who said I'm common, you dumb broads. I can take on the whole lot of you, you yellow-bellied broads. Bang, bang, bang, just like that.

(Jim stands on his feet and sits at a table. The lights are dimmed except for a spot on Jim.)

INTERLUDE

JIM

(Sings.)

And what has my noble face offered the world?
A smile.
Yes, it has done that.
A gentle look? Yes, my noble face has done that.
And what else have I offered the world?
A few kind words, perhaps.
And some elusive words.

And who am I?
Am I the wrongdoer or the wronged?

I never raised my hand to hurt a man.

And yet I ask: Who am I,
The wrongdoer or the wronged?

And what have my hands done?
They have reached out with love.
And the loved one has turned to me and said:
Who are you? ... Who are you? ...

I'm the wrongdoer.
That's who I am.

(*The lights come up.*)

Act 2: Dracula the Misunderstood

PART II

Dracula the Misunderstood

(*There is no time lapse between Part One and Part Two.*)

JOHN

(*To Jim.*)

Blackjack, sir?

JIM

What ...

JOHN

Blackjack?

(*Jim looks John over and nods. John shuffles the cards expecting Jim to come to his table. Jim pushes a chair away from his table with his foot inviting John to come to his. John shuffles the cards again, cuts them twice and looks at Jim. Jim challenges John by remaining where he is. John picks up the cards and holds them thinking what to do. Then, he puts two cards on the table face down and sneaks a look at Jim who remains seated. He looks at his card, then at Jim's and smiles feebly.*)

You win.

(*He goes to Jim. Through the following scene John puts a dollar on the table. Jim deals two cards each. One of the Hanging Women joins the players at their table and watches the game.*)

MOLLY

Give me a drink, Joe.

MACK

My name is not Joe.

MOLLY

Give me a drink.

MACK

What do you want?

MOLLY

Give me an absinthe.

MACK

You give me a pain. Did you guys hear that?

JOHN

What?

MACK

She wants an absinthe.

MOLLY

That's what we drink in the islands.

MACK

What islands?

(*Molly thinks a while.*)

JIM

Make it two.

JOHN

Make it three.

MACK

(*Referring to Molly.*)

Creep.

JOHN

Hit me.

(*Jim gives John a card.*)

Hit me again.

(*Jim gives John a card.*)

Hit me again.

(*Jim gives John a card.*)

Hit me again.

(*Jim gives John a card.*)

Hit me again.

JIM

How many cards have you got? You must be over.

JOHN

No, I'm not. Hit me again.

(*Jim gives John a card suspiciously.*)

Hit me again

(*They Indian-wrestle through the following scene. Mark puts three glasses on the counter.*)

MOLLY

Mack, set them up, Joe.

MACK

The name is Mack.

MOLLY

Set them up.

(*Molly walks to the players, and puts one foot up on the fourth chair. She puts a flower behind John's ear and kisses the Hanging Woman. Then, she considers a moment, takes the flower and puts it behind her own ear. Then she moves as if to kiss John, changes her mind, puts the flower behind the Hanging Woman's ear. Then she takes the flower and holds it over her lips as she tries to remember such a scene from the film Morocco. She then eats the flower. She starts walking toward the counter humming "One for My Baby." She is not satisfied with the song. Then starts humming "My Man." She is happier with that tune.*)

He isn't true.

He beats me too.

What can I do?

He isn't true.

He beats me too.

What can I do?

I don't really let anyone beat me.

MACK

So why do you keep saying it?

MOLLY

I like saying it.

MACK

I like saying it. I like saying it.

MOLLY

(*Sings.*)

He isn't true.

He beats me too.

What can I do?

MACCK

Phony! You want a sock in the jaw? Why don't you guys do something about this dame? She gives me a pain.

(Molly takes a gun from the counter and puts a bullet through John's hand, which ends the Indian wrestling.)

JIM

Thanks.

(To John.)

Stay?

JOHN

Hit me again.

(Jim gives John a suspicious and threatening look. John looks at the cards.)

I'm good.

JIM

(Dealing himself a card.)

I'm busted.

JOHN

I win.

(John puts the two dollars on his side of the table.)

JIM

Show me.

(John shuffles all cards and puts seven on the table. Jim puts the two dollars on his side of the table. They Indian-wrestle. Molly takes the gun and puts a bullet through Jim's hand.)

JOHN

Thanks.

(John takes the two dollars, and puts one back on the table. He takes the cards.)

I'm dealer.

JIM

Forget it.

JOHN

What do you mean, forget it?

JIM

I'm not playing.

(To Mack.)

How about that drink?

(Mack signals Molly to take the drinks to the table. Molly throws the glasses over her shoulder, one at a time. Jim catches them and throws them back. They juggle the glasses for a while. Jim fails to catch them. They fall to his feet.)

You make me feel frustrated.

MOLLY

How's that?

JIM

First you hang on and you like it, and then you ignore me.

MOLLY

Who, me?

JIM

Yes, you.

(Alberta enters. She wears a Shirley Temple wig and a child's dress)

MACK

(Signaling Molly to get Alberta out.)

Hey, Molly.

MOLLY

My name is not Molly.

JIM

What is your name?

MOLLY

I'm not telling anyone.

JIM

You could tell me.

MOLLY

I'm not telling.

JIM

What's the good of having a name if you don't tell anyone?

MOLLY

It's good. That way no one can call me.

JIM

I might want to write you a note.

MOLLY

I wouldn't read it anyway.

(*She goes to John.*)

Hey, handsome.

JIM

Don't talk to him. He's a fake.

MOLLY

What do you mean?

JIM

He never got laid in his life.

(*John threatens Jim. The lights flash on and off.*)

ALBERTA

He's cute.

MACK

(*To Alberta.*)

I told you, no children allowed.

(*Alberta taps to a chair and sits. Mack taps her shoulder.*)

Out.

(*She ignores him. Mack takes her by the collar out the door.*)

Yeah. You wouldn't believe it, would you? Smart aleck. Can't bear her. She dances all the time.

JOHN

She's an interesting-looking dame.

MOLLY

If you're not interested in me I was nor interested in you first.

JIM

Can't even think straight.

MOLLY

I can think straight. I just don't want to.

JOHN

Let me have another drink. Don't give me anymore of that licorice stuff. Give me a man's drink.

MACK

Like what?

MOLLY

Absinthe is a man's drink. If you drink a lot of it you go blind.

JOHN

Give me an absinthe.

(*He gives Jim an assertive look, then drinks the absinthe in one gulp.*)

Yes, that child is certainly an interesting-looking dame.

(*He gives Jim another assertive look and speaks to Mack.*)

Let me have another one of those. I don't care if I go blind.

(*Mack pours.*)

JIM

(*To himself.*)

He never got laid in his life.

JOHN

I'll have another.

MACK

You didn't drink that one yet.

(*He drinks it, belches several times and checks his vision.*)

JOHN

(*To Mack, attempting to be casual.*)

Why do you think he said I never got laid?

MACK

Don't pay attention to him. He's a creep.

JOHN

Ask him.

MACK

Hey, why did you say ...

JIM

All he's got is guns.

MACK

He's got more than guns. I bet you he's got more than guns.

JIM

(*Putting a dollar on the table.*)

I bet all he's got is guns.

MACK

(*Putting a dollar on the table.*)

I bet he's got more.

John does the "One Narrow Idea" dance. The dance consists of making the guns swing back and forth until he falls exhausted on the floor. The lights go to full intensity and remain so through the dance.)

JOHN

(*Sings.*)

One very long,
Very narrow
Idea.

One very long
And narrow
Idea.

A narrow idea.
An old idea.
A withered idea
Without reward.
A withering idea.
An old, old idea.

MACK

(*Taking the two dollars.*)

Yup, he's got more than guns.

JIM

(*Taking the two dollars from Mack.*)

No, he doesn't.

(*They Indian-wrestle. John helps Mack push Jim's arm down.*)

MACK

(*Taking the two dollars.*)

Thanks.

JOHN

What did you think of that dance?

MACK

That was swinging, man.

JOHN

Was that swinging? Or wasn't that swinging?

MACK

That was swinging, man.

JOHN

Did you ever see anyone swing like that?

MACK

Not that I can remember.

JOHN

Try to remember.

(*Mack thinks.*)

Well? ...

MACK

I can't remember.

JOHN

Try.

MACK

I said I can't remember.

JOHN

Then you never saw anyone swing that.

MACK

I can't remember.

JOHN

If you can't remember it's because you never saw anyone swing like that.

MACK

I don't know.

JOHN

(*Twisting Mack's arm.*)

What do you mean, you don't know?

MACK

I don't know.

JOHN

If you had, you would remember.

(*Mack doesn't answer. John points his gun at Mack's temple.*)

If you had, you would remember.

MACK

I suppose.

JOHN

Don't suppose. Did you or didn't you?

MACK

No, I never did.

JOHN

(*In narcissistic rapture.*)

Ahhhhhhh.

MACK

Jesus! What a creep.

JOHN

Ask that lady in.

MACK

What lady?

JOHN

The one you turned out.

MACK

The child?

JOHN

Ask her in.

MACK

Jesus!

(*Lights go back to normal. Mack goes to the door. On his way there he stops by Jim's table and gives him back his dollar.*)

MOLLY

(*To John.*)

If that's your taste you don't belong in my book of names and telephones like a sailor. ... I cross you out.

JOHN

What is she talking about?

MOLLY

If you like her.

MACK

Don't pay any attention to her.

JIM

Can't even speak English.

MOLLY

I can when I want to. ... I only don't want to.

MACK

(*To Alberta.*)

All right. You can come in.

(*Alberta dances in. She sings and taps.*)

ALBERTA

My two little feet,
Two little feet,
Tipity tap.
Tipitty tap.
Tipity tap.

Tipity tap.
Tipity tap.
Tipity tap tap tap.

All the world says hi.
All the world says hi hi hi.

Dance to the harmony.
Dance to the rhythm.
Hotel bar butter.
I like to dance at cocktail time.
I like to dance at cocktail time.
I like to tap tap tap tap tap and dance.
Tap tap tap tap and dance.
Tap tap tap tap and dance.
I like to dance.

Dance to the harmony.
Dance to the rhythm.
Hotel bar butter.
Cocktails at cocktail time.
I like to dance at cocktail time.

Sing.

Sing it again.
Sh sh sh sh sh.
Sing it again.
Sh sh sh sh sh.
Sing it again.
I like to dance at cocktail time.

JIM

You know why you haven't grown?

JOHN

She's grown.

ALBERTA

Why?

JIM

Because you haven't been loved.

ALBERTA

Creep.

JIM

I thought you might want to know.

ALBERTA

No, I don't want to know. I am a child. That's why I haven't grown. And I get plenty of love, so leave me alone.

JIM

How old are you?

ALBERTA

Twenty-seven.

JIM

(*He considers a moment.*)

You need love.

JOHN

This lady is with me if you don't mind.

JIM

No, I don't mind. But she should mind.

JOHN

Why should she mind?

ALBERTA

I don't mind.

(John presses Alberta's hand against his lips and remains in that position until he speaks again.)

JIM

(To Alberta.)

You need love.

(Alberta makes an obscene gesture to Jim.)

MACK

(Referring to Jim.)

Boy, he's finished.

JIM

What do you expect? You get involved with a broad like that and you're cooked. I didn't know she was German.

MOLLY

I was not German. I became German. You made me become German.

JIM

You always had it in you.

MOLLY

I am not a hen. I will not share my rooster with other hens. I'm the only hen or I'm not a hen.

JIM

She's crazy.

MOLLY

I may be crazy but I'm not a hen.

JIM

What's wrong with hens?

MOLLY

There's nothing wrong with hens. Only I'm not a hen.

JIM

I don't see why you had to be the only one. The others were happy.

MOLLY

But I'm not happy.

JIM

She's crazy.

MOLLY

I'm just wise and tough about you men.

JIM

I don't like tough women. I'm through with you.

MOLLY

I'm through with you before you are through with me.

JIM

Can't even speak English.

MOLLY

Only when I get angry.

(*She goes to the bird cage and sets the bird tree.*)

Fly away mine kleiner Vogel, baby. Esse alle Würmer die du kanust. That means fly away my little bird. Eat all the worms you can. Fly away mine kleiner Vogel baby. Esse alle Würmer die du kannst.

(*The Hanging Women surround Molly.*)

No ... no ... no ...

(*The Hanging Women giggle and go back to their places.*)

JIM

Creep.

MOLLY

Little man.

(*Jim goes to John and Alberta.*)

MACK

His pride is hurt.

JIM

No, it is not. I just think there's something wrong with her.

(To John and Alberta.)

May I join you?

JOHN

If the lady wishes.

ALBERTA

All right. But don't tell me I'm a hen.

JIM

I never told you you were a hen.

ALBERTA

I mean, OK, but don't tell me I need love.

JIM

OK.

(*He sits.*)

JOHN

Madam?...

ALBERTA

Sir? ...

JOHN

Would you like anything to drink?

ALBERTA

I'll have a mint julep with cherry syrup.

JOHN

(*To Jim.*)

Would your lady friend like a drink?

JIM

I have no lady friend. Can't you see I have no lady friend?

(*He gives Molly a dirty look.*)

ALBERTA

You don't have to get rude. You have no lady friend because you have no manners.

JOHN

(*To the Hanging Woman.*)

Would you iike a drink, madam?

(*The Hanging Woman smiles.*)

JIM

Why aren't you with the others?

(*The Hanging Woman joins the others.*)

Creep!

JOHN

(*To Mack.*)

A mint julep with cherry syrup. ... Make it two.

JIM

See? He's not real. He just drinks what everybody else drinks.

ALBERTA

I still like him better than you. Even if he's not real.

JOHN

I'm real. Can't you see I'm real?

(*He pinches himself and shakes the table.*)

Could I have done that if I weren't real?

ALBERTA

You're real. It's he who is not real.

(*John presses Alberta's hand against his lips.*)

JIM

(*Dismissing the subject.*)

I'm real.

ALBERTA

(*Referring to John.*)

And besides being real, he's cute.

JOHN

My peach.

(*He presses her hand against his lips again.*)

JIM

You see what I mean? He's not real.

ALBERTA

He looks real to me.

JOHN

My peach ... my pearl ...

(*He presses Alberta's hand against his lips.*)

JIM

He's just pretending to be real. That's why he kisses you.

ALBERTA

(*Hitting Jim on the head*)

He's not pretending. He kisses me because he likes my baby flesh ... and you stop bothering us. We want to be alone. Sit somewhere else.

JOHN

My peach, my pearl, my persimmon, I want to be alone with you. My peach, my pearl, when the impossible begins to seem possible. When love knocks at our door. All our expectations, dreams, desires go rampant. There is no end to what seems possible. There is no end to what we ask for. Sugar baby, candy child, give me your life,

ALBERTA

(*Matter-of-fact.*)

No.

(*John picks Alberta up. He looks for a place to take her. He is like a wild beast looking for a place to take his prey. She gets away from him. He runs after her.*)

HANGING WOMEN

(*Sing.*)

Is this true passion,
Or the way a vain man has
Of saying to himself:
I am not dead?

JOHN

I am not dead.
Not dead.
Not dead.

HANGING WOMEN

Is this true love?
True love?
True love?

One very long,
Very narrow,
Very old idea.
An old idea.
A long idea.
An old, old,
Withered idea,
Without reward.

A withering idea.
One very narrow,
Very old idea.
A narrow idea.

ALBERTA

Me, the little darling. The heaven on earth. The night without pain The honey of the flowers. I will not be yours. Ever. ... I

can't. ... I'm pure.

JOHN

My fairy tale, my peach, my pearl, grant me my wish.

ALBERTA

No.

JOHN

I am in control of my emotions. I always have been. Once I was almost in love. Yes, indeed, no one can say I've never loved. I am an important man. My scope is very narrow. Yes, it's very narrow, but it is wide enough to strike a pose of self-importance. ... That's all I need. ... Me, a failure? Never! I'm in control of my emotions. My emotions are feeble. Me, strong. The more I'm known to strangers the more I lose my sense of dignity. I have no point of view. I am well known, that's all I need. You know me. I know myself. What, me, get old? Never! That's not for me. Candy child, give me your life.

ALBERTA

No.

(John moves behind Alberta and sinks his teeth into her neck. Through the following song John and Alberta take vampirical love-making poses. Between the poses, and with the aid of the Hanging Women, they do a costume change with rapid choreographed movements. John removes his guns and his hat and puts on a cape. Alberta takes her wig off, letting her hair loose. Her dress grows long to the floor. He looks like a vampire. She is sensuous and glamorous. He sinks his teeth into her neck again.)

HANGING WOMEN

(Sing.)

Is this true passion,
Or the way a vain man has
Of saying to himself:
I am not dead?

Is this true love?
True love?
True love?

(John lifts his head and looks around. He moves in front of Alberta and stretches his arms as if to protect her.)

JOHN

Don't anyone touch my own. She's mine.

JIM

Who wants to.

JOHN

My one and only. My own.

MACK

Creep.

JOHN

Ahhh. Love, love, love. ...

(*He does a pirouette.*)

I feel at last alive.

(*He dances around with movements resembling a lizard's. He then takes Alberta to the mirror. By means of rear projection one sees Alberta in the mirror but not John. He moves away from her in terror and shame. To Alberta, from a distance.*)

Tell me that you see me.

(*She takes a step back.*)

Tell me that you love me.

(*She looks away from him.*)

Kiss me. Ahhh. My love recoils from me.

(*He sits down at a table. He is downcast. Alberta takes two steps toward him but stops. He watches her.*)

My lady said the hair around my temple
Is different from the rest,
And that it is a sight to behold. She said it is smooth and grows downward,
While the rest grows wild.

My lady said there's a line
From the back of my ear to my shoulder
That gives her pleasure to look at.
And she said as a present
She'll give me a flock of birds.
She is my love.
That lady is my love.

She speaks of love
Only angels know,
And yet she fears me.
My lady fears me.

(*She moves toward him.*)

My lady said
The joint that holds my jaw to my skull
Is delicate like a bird's.
So my lady said.

My lady said my face is life itself.
She is my love.
That lady is my love,
And yet, she fears me.

My lady said when she held me in her arms
She held not a man but the world.
And yet my lady fears me.
She fears me.

(*Alberta goes to John. She brings her hand to his cheek and kisses him.*)

ALBERTA

(*Sings.*)

The senses are five:
Sight, smell, hearing, taste, touch.
Los sentidos. Les sens. I sentiti.
The verb to sense in French
Refers to smelling, " *sens.* "
Tu sens bon.
In Italian, " *sentire,* "
It refers to hearing.
Sente amore mio.
In Spanish, " *sentir,* "
Means to feel. *Siento en la alma*
Unas ganas intensas de llorar.
In English to sense
Is nothing you can put your finger on.
I sense something unusual all around me.

Love, love, love. Love, love, love, love.
You have brought me to my senses
You have made sense of me
And the sense of me is you.
I hear. I see. I smell. I taste. I touch.
Oh, love.
My life is senseless without you.

(*They kiss. His back is to the audience. A cape he wears rolled up around his neck is let down. The cape bears an "S." John is now Superman. He turns around. An "S" is visible on his chest. They circle around the stage as if strolling in the park. The Hanging Women surround them singing. When they reach the center of the stage they each circle the stage in opposite directions. Half the Hanging Women follow John, the other half follow Alberta. They meet in the center again, and walk down the aisle, followed by the Hanging Women who carry garlands.*)

HANGING WOMEN

(*Sing.*)

She is my love.
That lady is my love.
She speaks of love
Only angels know.

MACK

Molly, that kid is doing better than you.

MOLLY

No, she is not.

MACK

Yes she is.

HANGING WOMEN

She is my love.
That lady is my love.
She speaks of love
Only angels know.

(*They exit.*)

JIM

Fiddlesticks.

(*There is a short pause and a sense of sadness.*)

Yeah, that's how it is.

MOLLY

Mack, play something amusing, Sam: I feel sad.

(*They are silent for a moment. Molly sighs.*)

JIM

I Beg your pardon?

MOLLY

Hm.

JIM

A second chance?

MOLLY

Hm.

JIM

Hm, hm. Not me. I'm quitting. ... You had your chance.

(*They recite the following.*)

MOLLY

To tell you I still love you?

Why? You care?

I loved you once.

What? You think that's nothing?

It isn't everyone who's loved the way I loved you.

You're feeling sorry now.

Well, too late, I'm quitting.

You can't expect me to survive all that.

JIM

I'm too proud. You're right.

And you're a two-time loser.

Once you had my love and didn't take it.

That makes it once you were the loser.

And now you want me back.

You lose again.

I'm too proud, you're right.

I'm quitting.

I'm not expected to survive all that.

(Jim walks to the door. He and Molly start singing with their backs to each other.)

JIM & MOLLY

A sense of incomplection ... yeah ... yeah ...
A joke without a laugh,
A friend who doesn't hear,
A promise without hope,
An offer withdrawn,
A goodbye with no departure.
And what? Am I expected to survive all that?
Ha ha. Fat chance. Not me. I'm quitting.

JIM

Johnny told me, August first,
There'll be a parade.
Ha ha. If the city permits.

MOLLY

Ronnie told me, August second,
We'll see a movie.
Ha ha. He changed his mind.

JIM

My horoscope said, August third,
I'd have good news. Ha ha. There was no news.

MOLLY

Mack told me, August fourth,
He'd give me a raise.
Ha ha. There was no raise.

JIM

My cousin told me, August fifth,
We'd go for a ride.
Ha ha. The car broke down.

MOLLY

August sixth, I took the bus.
It was a long ride,
And when I got there,
No one said hello.

JIM & MOLLY

And what? Am I expected to survive all that?
Ha, ha. That's all I can say.
Ha ha. Ha ha. Ha ha.

(Jim walks to the door. He turns back and shakes hands with Molly.)

JIM

Goodbye.

MOLLY

Goodbye.

(*He walks to the door again.*)

You know ...

JIM

... What? ...

MOLLY

In order to become what we are ...

JIM

Yes? ...

MOLLY

We have to go through many stages.

JIM

Yes.

(*Molly puts on the top hat. They laugh.*)

MOLLY

If we had met some other time ... perhaps ...

JIM

Perhaps we'll meet again some other time.

MOLLY

Yes.

JIM

I'll be going now.

(*He walks to the door.*)

See you later ... Molly?

MOLLY

(*Taking the hat off.*)

Yes ...

JIM

You'll wait for me?

MOLLY

I will. ... Will you recognize me?

JIM

Yes, I'll know you.

(They wave. He exits. Molly walks to the table where she first fell asleep. She leans her head on the table. Mack walks in and straightens the place, leaving it as in the beginning of the play. The Young Man enters. He carries luggage which resembles in color the Hanging Women's costumes. He looks at Molly.)

MACK

She's lost to the world. What would you have?